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**CHEROKEE RESERVATION**

**TRAILS PLAN**



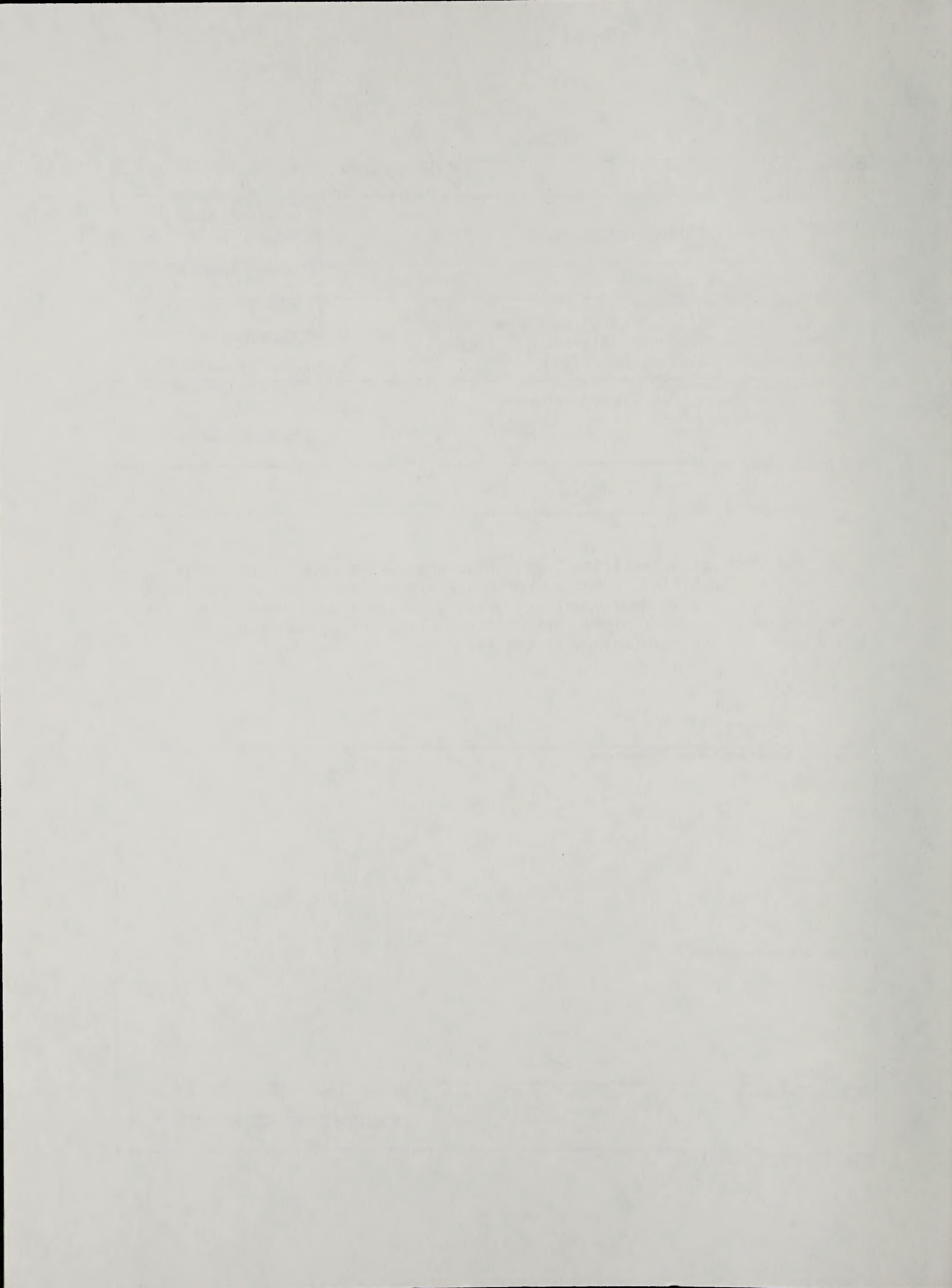




# CHEROKEE RESERVATION TRAILS PLAN

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CHEROKEE RESERVATION TRAILS PLAN

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# CHEROKEE RESEPARATION TALKS

January, 1975

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John Glowling, Forester  
Ralph Owl, Forestry Technician  
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# CHEROKEE RESERVATION TRAILS PLAN

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Trails Plan portrayed on the following pages was developed by the N. C. Department of Natural Resources and Community Development with the assistance of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Plan has identified some of the major trails within the reservation and trails that seem most suitable for use by the general public. Where possible, trail loops and trail horse-shoes were formed in order to provide convenience for the average hiker. Most trails identified are for hiking and backpacking; however, one trail of approximately 17 miles has been designated for horseback riding and hiking. The Trails Plan proposes extensions and additions to trails in order to provide the best "network" of trails; thus, giving the visitor an opportunity to experience a variety of terrain, views, and natural features. Furthermore, several trails could potentially interlock with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park trails system.

The management of a trails program requires the development of numerous trails management policies and regulations in order to preserve and protect the natural environment as well as the cultural amenities of the area. A list of policies, guidelines, and regulations that should be addressed by the Tribal Council is provided in Chapter III.

A brief description and pertinent information and data on each trail is provided in Chapter IV. Currently, the information on several trails is incomplete due to the need for extensions to trails; however, the information provided as well as the format should prove useful in the future development







of a trails brochure designed for public distribution.

Chapter V provides recommendations for immediate repair and maintenance of the designated trails. The Cherokee Tribal Council should request the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Forestry Department, to manage the trails system. The Bureau of Indian Affairs should utilize the Young Adult Conservation Corps and other groups for the initial maintenance and construction of these trails. Proper maintenance of the trails should occur prior to the opening of these trails to the general public.

Chapter VI explains the necessary interagency coordination required for implementing the Plan, and Chapter VII lists the procedures for implementation.







## II. TRAILS PLAN

The Cherokee Reservation Trails Plan is shown on the map on page 5.

This Plan was developed through inspection of existing trails and actual field examination of proposed trails. A description of each trail is provided in Chapter IV. The following is a brief explanation of important aspects of the legend elements as shown on the Plan Map.

EXISTING HIKER OR FOOT TRAILS - Existing trails were utilized as much as possible in the development of a trails network. Different degrees of maintenance and clearing will be required on these trails as indicated in Chapter V.

PROPOSED HIKER OR FOOT TRAILS - Proposed hiker trails were developed in order to provide the hiker with trail loops and the best recreational experience possible. The proposed sections are an important link in the development of a network of trails. These trail sections will have to be constructed or in some cases involve the reconstruction of an abandoned trail.

UNMAINTAINED FOOT TRAILS IN GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK - These are existing trails that are no longer maintained by the Park Service. In order for some Reservation trails to connect with the Great Smoky Mountain National Park trails, the Tribal Council will have to resolve this issue with the National Park Service.

HORSE AND HIKER TRAILS - In most cases these are existing Forest Service roads that have excellent potential for horse trails. The Plan proposes that these trails be made available for both horseback riders and hikers.







PROPOSED BACKCOUNTRY CAMP - These are areas proposed for overnight camping. Camping should be allowed only in designated areas in order to preserve the environment and enhance the campers' outdoor experience. At a later time, the Bureau of Indian Affairs should designate the number of tent spaces available at each site.

DRIVE-IN CAMP - These are the existing commercial drive-in camping areas that are located within or in close proximity to the Cherokee Reservation.

PARKING - Parking areas have been designated at or near trail heads.

Some parking areas already exist but in many cases parking arrangements must be made. A few instances will require the Tribal Council entering into agreement with a landowner and another situation will involve an agreement with the Blue Ridge Parkway. The parking area for the horse trail (Trail No. 6) should have plenty of space to enable the parking and maneuvering of horse trailers.

TRAIL MILEAGE - Distances along trail sections have been estimated by use of a pedometer.







## III. RECOMMENDED POLICIES, GUIDELINES, AND REGULATIONS

In order to successfully implement a trails plan, the Cherokee Tribal Council should adopt a set of policies or guidelines pertaining to the management of trails as well as set forth regulations that all trail users must be expected to abide by. The following policies, guidelines, and regulations should be adopted before the designated trails are opened to the public. The overall goal of a trails system should be to provide residents of the area and visitors an opportunity to have an enjoyable recreational experience into natural areas. To accomplish this goal, certain responsibilities must be delegated to persons or groups capable of managing the trails system. The following list of policies or guidelines is recommended for the actual management of the trails system and the following regulations are directed at those intending to use the trails. Once trail regulations are adopted, such information should be provided to the public as part of a trails brochure or other means as well as posted at all trail heads.

### CHEROKEE RESERVATION

#### TRAILS PLAN

#### MAP (PLACE HERE)

- 1) The Cherokee Tribal Council should request the Bureau of Indian Affairs to manage the trails system.
- 2) Trails shall be managed to offer an enjoyable recreational experience as well as to preserve and protect natural resources.
- 3) The trails included in the proposed trail system or plan are intended for use as hiking trails and horse trails as designated on the map, as access to backcountry-camping areas, and as access to other recreational activities such as fishing and hunting in compliance with existing state, federal, and Tribal Council regulations.







### III. RECOMMENDED POLICIES, GUIDELINES, AND REGULATIONS

In order to successfully implement a trails plan, the Cherokee Tribal Council should adopt a set of policies or guidelines pertaining to the management of trails as well as set forth regulations that all trail users must be expected to abide by. The following policies, guidelines, and regulations should be addressed before the designated trails are opened to the public. The overall goal of a trails system should be to provide residents of the area and visitors an opportunity to have an enjoyable recreational experience into natural areas. To accomplish this goal, certain responsibilities must be delegated to persons or groups capable of managing the trails system. The following list of policies or guidelines is recommended for the actual management of the trails system and the forthcoming regulations are directed at those intending to use the trails. Once trail regulations are adopted, such information should be provided to the visitor either as part of a trails brochure or other handout as well as posted at all trail heads.

#### Trails Management Policies and Guidelines

- 1) The Cherokee Tribal Council should request the Bureau of Indian Affairs to manage the trails system.
- 2) Trails shall be managed to offer an enjoyable recreational experience as well as to preserve and protect natural resources.
- 3) The trails included in the proposed trail system or Plan are intended for use as hiking trails and horse trails as designated on the map, as access to backcountry-camping areas, and as access to other recreational activities such as fishing and hunting in compliance with existing State, Federal, and Tribal Council regulations.







- 4) The Tribal Council shall work closely and coordinate recreational activities with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway whenever possible. Recreational activities on the reservation shall not interfere or disrupt the recreational activities of the Park or Blue Ridge Parkway but rather be planned and coordinated with these agencies in the interest of the general public and in the interest of preserving sensitive natural resources.
- 5) The Tribal Council should publish and distribute a trails brochure. This brochure should show the location of trails and describe and explain pertinent information for each trail (the Trail Information sheets on pages 13 to 21 are examples and guides for such a publication). The brochure should also list all trail regulations.
- 6) Under Bureau of Indian Affairs supervision, a work crew should be given the responsibility for constructing new trails or additions and also be responsible for the periodic repair and maintenance of all designated trails.
- 7) Parking areas at trail heads must be provided for all trails. Existing parking areas should be utilized whenever possible; however, the proposed Plan will require the Tribal Council to acquire or make arrangements (easements, lease, etc.) for additional parking areas.
- 8) Trail head signs, consistent in size and information, should be provided at all trail heads. Signs should also be placed at trail intersections for the convenience of the visitor. Furthermore a "painted" trail blaze should appear on trees or rocks along trails to assure visitors that they are on a designated trail.







- 9) A master sign list for a trails system should be developed by the maintainer (Bureau of Indian Affairs). This list should document the location of all signs, the text of each sign, and the size. In this way the maintainer is able to periodically check all signs and make replacements when necessary.
- 10) The Tribal Council should provide for ranger inspection of backcountry camping and hiking areas in order to enforce trail regulations and inspect trail conditions.
- 11) The trail maintainers should utilize the following publications as guides for trail construction, reconstruction, and maintenance:
  - a. AMC Field Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance, Appalachian Mountain Club, 1977.
  - b. Great Smoky Mountains National Park Trail Maintenance Handbook, National Park Service, revised March, 1978.
  - c. Forest Service Trails Handbook (FSH 7709, 12) U. S. Forest Service.
- 12) All visitors and users of Tribal Council trails shall be expected to abide by the trail regulations as listed on the following page.







## Trail Regulations

The following regulations are written in such a way so as to be easily included as part of a trails brochure.

Only through the adherence to the following trail regulations can the trails and wilderness character be preserved on the Reservation:

1. A backcountry camping permit is required for all overnight camping. These permits can be obtained from the Cherokee Tribal Office or the Bureau of Indian Affairs. All persons wishing to hike into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and camp overnight in the Park must obtain the proper overnight backcountry camping permit from a Park Visitor Center or Ranger Station.
2. Permits will not be issued more than 30 days in advance.
3. Backcountry Campsites - Camping is permitted in only designated campsites and areas. (The Bureau of Indian Affairs should eventually indicate the number of tent spaces at each backcountry campsite). Use of these campsites is limited to a maximum of 14 days.
4. Feeding wildlife is prohibited.
5. Build fires at designated sites only. Use dead and down wood only. Cutting live trees is prohibited. Keep fire small and never leave it unattended. The use of backpack stoves whenever possible minimizes impact upon the backcountry environment.
6. All non-burnable trash packed in must be packed out. Do not pack in glass containers.







7. Camping within 25 feet of any stream, spring or other water source is prohibited. Do not wash dishes or use detergents in water sources. Use a biodegradable soap for all dishwashing. Dispose of dishwater at least 25 feet from a water source.
8. For proper sanitation, make toilets in a shallow hole (100 feet or more from camp or water source) and cover with dirt after use.
9. Do not shortcut on trail switchbacks.
10. All food should be suspended 10 feet high and 4 feet from the nearest limb or trunk, when not in use.
11. Purify all drinking water.
12. Tribal Council Fishing and Hunting regulations shall apply.
13. Motorized vehicles are prohibited on all hiker trails.
14. Parking vehicles at trail head must be done so in designated parking areas.
15. Pets must be under control at all times and/or on a leash.  
Pets are not permitted on Great Smoky Mountains National Park trails.

#### Horse Use

Horses are permitted on designated horse trails but prohibited on trails designated as hiker or foot trails only. Horse parties may use any of the designated campsites located on trails open to their use.

#### Horse Use Regulations

1. Horse parties must obtain a backcountry use permit for any overnight backcountry camping.







2. Use is limited to 3 consecutive nights per campsite.
3. Horses must be kept under physical control at all times and must not be turned loose to graze or water.
4. In campsites without hitchracks, avoid damage to trees and adjacent vegetation by tying horses to a picket line between trees.
5. Horses are not permitted in sections of campsites generally used for cooking and sleeping.
6. Users must leave camp in a clean and sanitary condition and unburnable trash must be packed out.
7. Scatter manure away from the campsite.

At the present time, trail shelters have not been proposed for Reservation trails. After management of the trails for a period of time, the Bureau of Indian Affairs should determine the need for trail shelters and, if provided, add shelter regulations to the aforementioned list.







#### IV. TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS

The following pages provide a brief description of each trail as shown on the Trails Plan Map. Each trail is numbered and keyed to the Trails Plan Map. In some cases, such as trail distances and hiking time, the information shown is incomplete due to the fact that such information will only be available upon the implementation of the proposed trail extensions and with further detailed field work. However, the format provided here should be utilized in the development of a trails brochure for public distribution. A two-page brochure (front and back) can portray the trails map on one side with a description of each trail and other pertinent information (such as trail regulations) provided on the other side.

##### Trail Description

From the old Cherokee Indian Village this trail gently slopes from the Indian village past some stone ruins are encountered on the way to the Mt. Noble Tower. The tower provides a splendid view of the surrounding area and is one of the best views in Western North Carolina. From the Tower to Boundary Trail the trail at first gently slopes to the National Park and then becomes steeper. The trail is paved by Fox Road, after Fox Road the trail becomes steeper and rougher and is not recommended for Boundary Trail. Total trip is 10 miles. A proposed trail connection would provide hikers with an opportunity to hike from Mt. Noble to Newton Field, etc.

Elevation at Ocoee/Cherokee Indian Village: 2,200 feet  
Elevation at Mt. Noble Lookout Tower: 4,040 feet  
Elevation at Mt. Noble: 5,200 feet  
Elevation at Boundary Trail: 2,000 feet







## TRAIL DESCRIPTION - TRAIL NO. 1

Trail Name: Mt. Noble-Boundary Tree Trail

Distance: Total 7½ miles

From Oconaluftee Indian Village to Mt. Noble 3 miles and walking time not available.

From Mt. Noble to Boundary Tree 4.5 miles and two hours walking time.

Access:

1. By way of Oconaluftee Indian Village.
2. Take U. S. 441 to Boundary Tree Motel and drive to rear of motel to Mt. Noble Lookout Tower Trail.

Outstanding Features

- An excellent view is provided from the Mt. Noble Tower.
- Oconaluftee Indian Village.
- Proposed trail section offers potential access to Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Trail Description

From the Oconaluftee Indian Village this trail gently slopes from the Indian Village but some steep areas are encountered on the way to the Mt. Noble Tower. The Tower provides a splendid view of the surrounding area and is one of the best views in Western North Carolina. From the Tower to Boundary Tree the trail at first gently slopes to the National Park and Reservation Boundary line and passes by Fox Knob; after Fox Knob the trail becomes steep in areas and numerous switchbacks are encountered to Boundary Tree. Total trip is 7½ miles. A proposed trail connection would provide hikers with an opportunity to hike from Mt. Noble to Newton Bald, etc.

Elevation at Oconaluftee Indian Village: 2,200 feet

Elevation at Mt. Noble Lookout Tower: 4,040 feet

Elevation at Mt. Noble: 4,066 feet

Elevation at Boundary Tree: 2,000 feet







## TRAIL DESCRIPTION - TRAIL NO. 2

Trail Name: Pigeon Creek Trail

Distance: - 3.6 miles and approximately 2½ hours walking time from Mingo Creek Campground to headwaters of Pigeon Creek.  
- Distance to Big Witch not available.

Access:

1. Take U. S. 441 to Big Cove Road and proceed to Mingo Falls Campground where sign indicates Pigeon Creek Trail.
2. Big Witch Overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Outstanding Features

- Mingo Falls.
- Numerous views from ridges along trail.

Trail Description

This trail offers a variety of terrain and should be challenging and rewarding to even the experienced hiker. The trail deserves a moderately strenuous rating from Big Witch Overlook to Mingo Falls; however, if hikers choose to travel from Mingo Falls to Big Witch then expect a strenuous hike. Numerous views are provided from the ridges between Mingo Falls and Pigeon Creek. Also, wild flowers can be expected to be seen blooming along the trail. The proposed additional section of trail will provide access to Big Witch Overlook and Gap. This proposed section is an integral part in the formulation of a network of trails in the heart of the Cherokee Indian Reservation. If Big Witch Gap is not desired, the hiker can continue to Bunches Creek Road as shown on the map.

Elevation at Mingo Falls Campground: 2,231 feet

Elevation at Big Witch Overlook: 4,160 feet







## TRAIL DESCRIPTION - TRAIL NO. 3

Trail Name: Big Witch Gap Trail

Distance: Proposed section of trail; therefore, information incomplete at present time.

- Big Witch Gap to Madcap Branch 2.4 miles.
- Proposed section - not available.
- Lickstone Ridge Area 2 3/4 miles (1 1/4 hours walking time).
- Blue Wing Gap Section 3 7/8 miles (1 3/4 hours walking time).

Access:

1. Big Witch Gap along Blue Ridge Parkway.
2. From designated Horse Trail.
3. From U.S. 19, take Wright's Creek Road and take a right onto Big Witch Creek Road for approximately 1 mile to designated parking area.

Outstanding Features

- Big Witch Overlook.
- Variety of terrain will be encountered.
- Numerous views as trail passes over parkway and along Lickstone Ridge.
- Soco Bald.

Trail Description

This trail can either begin at Big Witch Gap or function as a continuation from the Mingo Falls Trail. The hiker will encounter a variety of terrain along this trail and will experience several nice views along Lickstone Ridge. From Big Witch Gap the first section of the trail is a logging road, but will turn into a foot path along Madcap Branch and across Lickstone Ridge and into the Blue Wing Gap area. The hiker should find this trail moderately strenuous with the climb from the Madcap Branch area to Lickstone Ridge the most strenuous section of the trail. Numerous views will be encountered along the logging road, from the parkway crossing, and along Lickstone Ridge. From Lickstone Ridge the trail gently slopes down into Jenkins Creek and from Jenkins Creek will for a short way (3/4 mile) follow the horse trail to the Blue Wing Gap section of the trail. The latter section of the trail, Blue Wing Gap section which is also gently sloping and follows contours, offers a good overlook view into Soco Valley.

The proposed sections of trail are an integral part in the proposed network of trails.

Elevation at Big Witch Gap: 4,149 feet.

Elevation at Lickstone Ridge: 5,200 feet.







## TRAIL DESCRIPTION - TRAIL NO. 4

Trail Name: Bradley Branch-Owl Branch and Proposed Barnett Knob Trail

Distance: Existing trail - 4 3/8 miles with a hiking time of 1½ hours from Bradley Branch to Owl Branch.

### Access:

1. Take U.S. 19 to Wright's Creek Road and turn right; take Wright's Creek Road to Bradley Branch and park at designated parking area.
2. Take Big Cove Road to Owl Branch and turn right, follow until road makes a right-angle turn and park at designated parking area.
3. With the implementation of proposed trail, access can be by Barnett Knob along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

### Outstanding Features

From Bradley Creek the hiker experiences gentle slopes along first part of trail. The headwaters of numerous streams are passed along lower part of trail beneath Rattlesnake Mountain. With the implementation of the proposed trail, the hiker could experience one of the most spectacular views in Western North Carolina at Barnett Knob and the lookout tower.

### Trail Description

From Bradley Branch the hiker will experience an invigorating but not strenuous hike of 4 3/8 miles. This is a good hike for beginners and those desiring a relaxing hike. From Bradley Branch the trail is not strenuous but from Owl Branch should be considered moderately strenuous. Small headwaters of tributaries of the Oconaluftee River are passed along the trail section beneath Rattlesnake Mountain. The implementation of the proposed trail section from Barnett Knob will provide hikers excellent views including the view from Barnett Knob as well as provide an integral link in the network of trails.

Elevation at Barnett Knob: 4,665 feet

Elevation at Rattlesnake Mountain: 3,792 feet

Elevation at Owl Branch: 2,200 feet







## TRAIL DESCRIPTION - TRAIL NO. 5

Trail Name: Mingo Creek Trail

Distance: Information Incomplete

Access: This trail can be reached by way of the Mingo Falls Trail once the proposed connector trail has been constructed. Also, access to this trail will be available by way of the proposed Barnett Knob Trail.

### Outstanding Features

- Use of this trail can provide hikers with an excellent loop trail whether starting at Mingo Falls Campground or Barnett Knob Trail and/or Big Witch Overlook.
- By way of this trail the hiker will have the opportunity to experience the beauty of Mingo Creek and Mingo Falls.

### Trail Description

The Mingo Creek Trail is gently sloping and follows Mingo Creek most of the way. Trail construction and reconstruction will be required over approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  of this trail before opening. The completion of this trail will provide an important link in forming a network of trails in the heart of the Cherokee Indian Reservation.

Elevation at Mingo Falls Campground: 2,200 feet.

Elevation at Blue Ridge Parkway: 3,450.







## TRAIL DESCRIPTION - TRAIL NO. 6

Trail Name: Soco Gap Horse Trail

Distance: Total - 12 miles (with connector 17 miles)

Access: Take U.S. 19 to Soco Gap and turn onto gravel road at Cherokee Indian Reservation sign just south of the Blue Ridge Parkway junction with U.S. 19. Recommended that trail users start at Soco Gap and travel to Soco Bald, Big Witch Gap onto Jenkins Creek Road and return to Soco Gap by way of the connector (5.3 miles) as shown.

### Outstanding Features

- Numerous views from trail as well as different terrain to be encountered.
- Big Witch Gap and Overlook can be walked to by horse travelers.
- Part of trip parallels Blue Ridge Parkway.

### Trail Description

This trail is an old logging road that offers an invigorating experience for both hikers and horseback riders. The total trail length is approximately 17 miles with several camp sites provided along the trail. Access for horseback riders is provided at the Soco Gap Trail Head. The trail is moderately steep in some areas but is wide with a good trail tread and should provide a good horse riding experience. This trail parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway in places and offers good views of the surrounding mountains.

Elevation at Soco Gap: 4,345 feet  
Elevation at Docks Gap: 4,930 feet  
Elevation at Soco Bald: 5,400 feet  
Elevation at Big Witch Gap: 4,149 feet







## TRAIL DESCRIPTION - TRAIL NO. 7

Trail Name: Heintooga Trail

Distance: 3/4 mile to Great Smoky Mountains National Park Boundary - trail continues into Park to Heintooga Overlook and Picnic Area.

Access: Take U.S. 441 to Big Cove Road, take Big Cove Road to Bunches Creek Road (gravel road) and turn right and continue approximately two miles to designated trail head on left.

### Outstanding Features

- Heintooga Creek.
- Heintooga Overlook in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

### Trail Description

This trail begins by following Heintooga Creek and is gently sloping to the National Park Boundary line. From the Park line the trail becomes relatively steep and strenuous to Heintooga Ridge. The trail continues to Flat Creek Bald and onto the Heintooga Overlook.

Elevation at Trail Head: 2,800 feet.

Elevation at Heintooga Overlook: 5,360 feet.







## TRAIL DESCRIPTION - TRAIL NO. 8

Trail Name: Tow String Creek-Hughes Ridge Trail

Distance: - 8.3 miles and 3½ hours walking time from Tow String.  
- 8.3 miles and 4¼ hours walking time from Smokemont Campground.

Access:

1. From Smokemont Campground - take U.S. 441 to Smokemont Campground and trail head faces directly across from bridge crossing Oconaluftee River.
2. From Tow String - take U.S. 441 to Tow String Road, continue to end of Tow String Road and park at designated site near trail head.

Outstanding Features

- Variety of terrain to be encountered along trail.
- Smokemont Campground, saddle horses, Oconaluftee River.
- From Smokemont Campground it is 12 miles to Pecks Corner and junction with the Appalachian Trail.

Trail Description

From Tow String Creek trail head the trail begins by following an old logging road and is a strenuous hike to the National Park Boundary line. Then the trail follows contours to the Hughes Ridge Trail which gradually descends to the Smokemont Campground area.

From the Smokemont Campground the hiker will experience a stimulating and strenuous hike along the Hughes Ridge Trail to the junction of Tow String Creek Trail. The Tow String Creek Trail section follows contours and will descend along a logging road to the Tow String Creek Trail Head.

One of the major features of this trail is that from either trail head the trail provides a good hiker experience on the way to the junction with the Appalachian Trail at Pecks Corner.

Elevation at Tow String Trail Head: 2,600 feet.  
Elevation at Becks Bald: 5,053 feet.  
Elevation at Smokemont: 2,200 feet.







## TRAIL DESCRIPTION - TRAIL NO. 9

Trail Name: Tow String Excursion

Distance: 3.5 miles and 1½ hours walking time.

Access: By way of Tow String Creek trail head (see access description of Trail No. 8).

### Outstanding Features:

This trail crosses the headwaters of several tributaries of Raven Fork.

### Trail Description

This trail provides a relatively short excursion from the Tow String Trail.







## V. RECOMMENDATIONS - TRAILS MAINTENANCE

All the trails designated on the Trails Plan will need some maintenance before opened to the general public. Some trails require only minor work, such as the clearing of overhanging branches, whereas sections of other trails need treadway improvement and erosion control devices. Furthermore, trail extensions as proposed will be necessary to complete the trail network as shown on the Trails Plan. This chapter gives a brief description of trail maintenance practices that should be performed periodically and/or as required on all trails and then provides specific recommendations for each trail as numbered and keyed to the Trails Plan. Finally, recommendations for the entire trail system are provided at the end of the chapter.

### General Trails Maintenance

The following is a list of trail maintenance activities that should be performed on all trails periodically and/or as needed. A Forest Supervisor should inspect each trail annually and make a list of repairs required for each trail. The publication AMC (Appalachian Mountain Club) Field Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance describes concisely but in detail procedures and applications for trail maintenance with all the appropriate drawings and recommended tools. The manual should be used as a guide by the Reservation for trail maintenance activities.

1. Trail Clearing - Almost all trails will need clearing at some time or another. The width of trails should be four to eight feet with a clearing overhead of at least eight feet. Standardizing is the technique of clearing brush next to a trail to put it into standard condition, which means that there should be adequate clearance in width and height for comfortable hiking.







2. Trail Marking - All trails should be marked by signs, blazes, cairns, and other means. Signs should be placed at trail heads and at trail junctions. Blazes should be provided along the trail to assure the hiker that he has not wandered from the designated trail. Signs will have to be replaced periodically due to destruction or weathering.
3. Erosion Control - Some sections of most trails will suffer from erosion. Erosion control is necessary to maintain the trail treadway. "Waterbars" and "steps" are two of the major erosion control devices used on trails. These devices should be considered not only erosion control devices but also erosion preventative devices. Waterbars and steps can be in the form of wood or rock depending upon availability. The details for placement of waterbars and steps can be found in the AMC Field Guide. "Rock" and "log cribbing" are techniques that involve creating a treadway on sections of trail that have severe gullying. The uphill side of the tread can also be secured by using log cribbing.
4. Hardening Trails - Many trails have low lying and wet areas. These areas are wet, slippery, muddy, and usually cause the hiker to leave the designated trail and consequently damaging the trail surroundings. "Step stones", "rock treadway", and "bog bridges" are the most frequently used solutions in these situations. The design of these devices can be found in the AMC Field Guide.







5. Trash Removal - Trash and garbage left by inconsiderate hikers and campers will have to be removed by the Forester and work crews in charge of maintaining the trails.

There are several manuals that should be utilized by field personnel as guidelines for trail maintenance and construction and these include:

1. AMC Field Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance, Appalachian Mountain Club, 1977.
2. Great Smoky Mountains National Park Trail Maintenance Handbook, National Park Service, revised March, 1978.
3. Forest Service Trails Handbook (FSH 7709.12) U. S. Forest Service.

#### Trails Plan - Trail Maintenance and Special Notes

The following pages describe the extent of maintenance required on the trails that comprise the Cherokee Reservation Trails Plan. Each trail is numbered and keyed to the Trails Plan Map.







## TRAIL NO. 1 - MT. NOBLE-BOUNDARY TREE TRAIL

### Special Notes and Trail Recommendations:

- Minor clearing will be required along numerous sections of the trail.
- Along Boundary Tree section there are a few areas in need of water bars or other erosion control measures.
- There is a need for some clearing along ridges of Mt. Noble and Fox Knob to enhance views.
- At steep grades "steps" are needed to slow water and sustain soil.
- Step stones are needed in some wet areas along the Boundary Tree section.
- There is a need for sign clarification to improve the juncture of Mt. Noble and Boundary Tree sections of the trail.
- The proposed trail section has potential for connecting with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and providing hikers with a trail to Newton Bald and onto Smokemont Campground. However, a short section of trail within the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is not currently maintained by the Park Service, and the Tribal Council must resolve this situation before constructing the proposed trail section.
- Trail head signs should be consistent with other trail head signs proposed for all trails.







## TRAIL NO. 2 - PIGEON CREEK TRAIL

### Special Notes and Trail Recommendations:

- Along the existing portion of trail, minor clearing and standardization of trail will be required.
- Erosion control devices, such as waterbars, will be required along some of the existing sections of trail.
- Step stones will be required along some sections of the trail that run near the Pigeon Creek.
- The construction of the proposed trail section should be completed before the opening of the trail. This addition will provide an integral link in forming a network of trails in the heart of the Cherokee Indian Reservation.
- Trail head signs will be required at Big Witch Overlook and Gap.







## TRAIL NO. 3 - BIG WITCH GAP TRAIL

### Special Notes and Trail Recommendations

- From Big Witch Gap to Madcap Branch - the logging road is fine for hiking but provisions should be made for minor clearing along the road to enhance views.
- The proposed trail section from Madcap Branch area across Lickstone Tunnel should be completed prior to opening of the trail. The trail will cross the Blue Ridge Parkway by crossing over Lickstone Tunnel and continue along Lickstone Ridge to the junction with existing trail. Blue Ridge Parkway personnel indicate this can be done and are willing to coordinate such an endeavor with the Tribal Council. The construction of the proposed section will provide an important link in forming a network of trails in the heart of the Cherokee Indian Reservation.

- Lickstone Ridge Section:

This section of the trail needs a good, clear crossing at the point where the trail crosses the horse trail and connects with the proposed trail section. Good signs should help with the clarification. Also, this section needs the placement of some erosion control devices where the trail follows an old logging road. Minor clearing and standardization will be required along this section prior to opening the trail.

- Blue Wing Gap Section:

This section is approximately 3 7/8 miles of trail and will require different degrees of maintenance:

1. The first .8 of mile will require minor clearing and standardization of trail and improvement of trail treadway will be required.







2. Major clearing and trail construction will be required from .8 mile to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  mile.
3. Step stones will be required where trail crosses stream.
4. From  $2\frac{1}{4}$  mile point to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  mile point there is a need for major clearing and trail construction.
5. From  $2\frac{3}{4}$  mile point to the trail end there is a need for major clearing and standardization of trail.
6. Minor clearing will be necessary to provide a good overlook into Soco Valley.

Other Recommendations for Entire Trail:

- Trail treadway should be improved throughout.
- Signs should be placed at all crossings and general trail clarification and designation so that hikers will not be confused.
- Trail head signs will be required.
- A designated parking area will need to be acquired off of Big Witch Creek Road.







## TRAIL NO. 4 - BRADLEY BRANCH-OWL BRANCH AND PROPOSED BARNETT KNOB TRAIL

### Special Notes and Trail Recommendations

- Parking areas at both Bradley Branch and Owl Branch must be acquired before the opening of this trail.
- The trail requires minor clearing and standardization.
- Some areas along the ridges should be provided for viewing the surrounding mountains. Small clearings will enhance views.
- Trail head signs will be required.
- The proposed section along this trail would definitely be the most inspiring section of the trail. Coordination with the Blue Ridge Parkway will be required to provide a trail head sign and parking area near the gate leading to the Cherokee Reservation Fire Tower.
- The construction and completion of the proposed Barnett Knob section will provide an integral link in forming a network of trails in the heart of the Cherokee Indian Reservation.







## TRAIL NO. 5 - MINGO CREEK TRAIL

### Special Notes and Trail Recommendations

- From the Blue Ridge Parkway this trail needs some major "trail re-construction". The remains of an old trail still are present but needs major clearing and standardization and in some areas trail construction.
- The section of trail shown as existing pertains to an old logging road that should provide a good treadway. This section of trail needs only minor clearing.
- Some wet areas exist along the trail and if these areas are continued for use step stones or bog bridges should be provided.
- This trail shows a proposed trail section for a connector to the Mingo Falls Trail. This should be completed before the trail is opened to the public.
- A sign should be provided at the point where the trail crosses the Blue Ridge Parkway. A parking space will not be required at this point since parking would be available at Mingo Falls Campground and at the proposed Barnett Knob Trail Head.
- Completion of this trail will provide an integral link in forming a network of trails in the heart of the Cherokee Indian Reservation.







## TRAIL NO. 6 - SOCO GAP HORSE TRAIL

### Special Notes and Trail Recommendations

- A parking area at Soco Gap trail head must be provided. This parking area should be large enough for horse trailers and provided with enough turnaround space.
- An overnight camping area(s) must be provided with enough space for boarding horses.
- There is a need for some overhead clearing along the trail, especially along the trail connector between Jenkins Creek Road and Soco Gap Road (access road).
- There is a need for some minor clearing to enhance the views along the horse trail.
- The treadway should be inspected periodically and, where necessary, gravel and grade as needed for tread stability.
- Trail head signs will be required.
- Hitching posts will be required at different areas along trail, especially camping areas.







## TRAIL NO. 7 - HEINTOOGA TRAIL

### Special Notes and Trail Recommendations

- There is a need for a trail head sign and a clarification of the trail head.
- This trail needs minor clearing and improvement of trail tread as well as better designation of the main trail tread.
- The section of the Heintooga Trail within the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is not currently maintained by the Park Service. In order for this trail to be a viable aspect of the Trail Plan, the Tribal Council must first resolve this issue with the Park Service.







## TRAIL NO. 8 - TOW STRING CREEK-HUGHES RIDGE TRAIL

### Special Notes and Trail Recommendations

- This trail will need some minor clearing and trail standardization along the Tow String section.
- There is a need for a sign where the Tow String section and Hughes Ridge Trail intersect.
- A parking area needs to be designated along with trail head sign at the Tow String Creek trail head area.
- An agreement between the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Cherokee Indian Reservation should be made regarding maintenance of the Tow String trail section that lies within the National Park. This section is currently unmaintained by the GSMNP. Perhaps the Reservation could be responsible for maintenance to the intersection of the Hughes Ridge Trail and the National Park Service responsible for that section of the Hughes Ridge Trail that passes through the most northwestern part of the Reservation. In any event, maintenance responsibilities must be resolved to make this trail, especially the Tow String section, a viable hiker trail.







## TRAIL NO. 9 - TOW STRING EXCURSION

### Special Notes and Trail Recommendations

- There is a need for a sign at the Tow String Trail Head designating this trail.
- The trail needs minor clearing and standardization and in some places requires major clearing and reconstruction.







## Final Trail Recommendations

1. Trails 1, 7, and 8 offer potential access to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. However, sections of these trails lie within the Park and are not currently maintained or planned for maintenance by the Park Service. Therefore, before including these trails in the Plan, the Tribal Council must resolve this issue with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. There will be little need to designate these trails as part of the Plan unless maintenance is resumed on the current unmaintained sections of the Park trails.

One potential problem with Reservation trails connecting with Park trails is that overnight hikers will have access via the Reservation to Park trails without first obtaining a backcountry camping permit as required by the Great Smoky Mountains National Park for all backcountry camping. The backcountry permit system regulates the number of campers for the purpose of preserving the natural environment as well as assuring an enjoyable camping experience for visitors. Perhaps the Tribal Council can agree to indicate at the trail head of all reservation trails that lead to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park that a backcountry permit from a GSMNP Ranger is required before overnight camping is permitted in the Park. Such an announcement at reservation trail heads as well as an explanation in the proposed trail brochure could prevent hikers from abusing the backcountry permit system.

2. The Bureau of Indian Affairs should be designated as the agency responsible for maintaining and administering the trail system.







3. A network of trails in the heart of the Cherokee Reservation has been proposed by utilizing existing trails and by proposing the extension or addition of trails to form several loop trails. With the approval of the Tribal Council, the Bureau of Indian Affairs should as soon as possible begin work on implementing the proposed network. This set of trails will provide visitors with several loop trails that offer a variety of terrain, scenery, and convenience to the other activities on the Reservation. Work on these trails should not be delayed since trail construction and parking arrangements will require considerable time and effort.
4. Signs - Signs are an important element of any trail. The trails' name, direction, highlights, distances and destinations all need to be conveyed to the hiker using them. All signs should be consistent in character and not detract from the natural surroundings. Signs should be placed so as to designate trails and clearly direct visitors to desired locations. Signs should also be placed at all trail intersections to prevent confusion.
5. Trail regulations should be posted at all trail heads along with the trail head sign.
6. Several of the trails as shown on the Plan Map will require the acquisition or arrangement for parking areas at trail heads. These arrangements should be performed before the opening of the trails.
7. The recommendations provided in this chapter for each trail should serve as a guide for the extent of new construction and maintenance required of trails. Before work begins on each trail a detailed work plan or list of maintenance and construction







- activities for each trail should be prepared by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This work plan should be developed through detailed investigation of each trail by BIA personnel. Once the work plan is developed, work crews should be assigned to the task of repairing, maintaining, and constructing the trails.
8. Trails and camping areas must be periodically and consistently inspected to determine their use and need for maintenance. The master sign list, as described on page 8, should be used to determine the need for sign replacements.
  9. The proposed trail system in most cases attempted to utilize public or Tribal Council lands; however, in some instances trails and parking areas involve private lands and the Tribal Council must make arrangements (i.e. lease, easements) with these property owners.
  10. The Policies, Guidelines, and Regulations as recommended in Chapter III should be adopted by the Tribal Council.
  11. At this time, trail shelters have not been recommended for the trails; however, at a later time the Bureau of Indian Affairs may determine such a need.
  12. With the implementation of the Trails Plan and after a period of time, perhaps one year for managerial review and evaluation, the Tribal Council should consider some additional features to the trails. A spur trail off of the Mount Noble-Boundary Tree Trail would be a good location for a nature trail. Such a trail, with the proper indicators and signs, could provide a valuable educational experience for school children and naturalists.







Another additional feature could be the identification of cultural and historical sites along the trails. Historical markers could indicate the historical significance of certain areas and provide facts about the history of the Cherokee Indians.







## VI. COORDINATION

The proposed Trails Plan has been discussed and coordinated with representatives of the U. S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, and the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Cherokee Tribal Council, with assistance from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, should work closely with these agencies in the implementation of the Plan. A few trails wind through the Blue Ridge Parkway jurisdiction but will not conflict with motorized vehicles since the trails in most cases are some distance from the Parkway. The Blue Ridge Parkway has expressed an interest and willingness to assist with the implementation of the Plan. Specifically, the proposed parking area near Barnett Knob, the proposed trail over Lickstone Tunnel, and the trail connector for Trail No. 4 and Trail No. 5, should all be coordinated with the Parkway.

Trails 1, 7, and 8 connect with currently unmaintained sections of trails within the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Tribal Council must develop a maintenance agreement with the Park Service before these sections of trail are opened for public use. The Park Service has expressed a concern about overnight hikers entering the Park by way of Reservation trails without the proper Great Smoky Mountains National Park backcountry camping permit. Hikers and visitors should be aware of the different jurisdictions and where applicable different trail policies. The Tribal Council should assure the Park Service that Park regulations as well as Reservation trail regulations will be posted at the trail head of all Reservation trails leading into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. A special note can be added to the trail head sign or posted regulations emphasizing the requirement for a Great Smoky Mountains National Park Backcountry Camping Permit from a National Park Ranger when overnight camping is desired within the National Park.







## VII. PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The following are the basic procedures for implementing the Cherokee Reservation Trails Plan.

- STEP 1: The Cherokee Tribal Council should formally adopt the Trails Plan.
- STEP 2: The Cherokee Tribal Council should request the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Forestry Department, to assist with the implementation of the Plan and to maintain the trails system on behalf of the Tribal Council.
- STEP 3: The Tribal Council and Bureau of Indian Affairs should coordinate the Plan with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Blue Ridge Parkway as recommended within the report.
- STEP 4: The Tribal Council should acquire or make arrangements for parking areas at those trail head locations that currently lack public parking spaces.
- STEP 5: Using Chapter V as a guide for the extent of maintenance and construction required on each trail, the Bureau of Indian Affairs should develop a work plan for each trail by designating the type of maintenance required along each trail section. This information will be used by the maintenance crews.
- STEP 6: The Bureau of Indian Affairs should "flag out" the proposed trail sections and include this as part of the work plan for the trail system.







- STEP 7: The Bureau of Indian Affairs should, where necessary, train work crews on trail maintenance techniques and procedures. Copies of The Great Smoky Mountains National Park Trail Maintenance Handbook should be distributed to the work crew members. The Appalachian Mountain Club Field Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance and other publications as mentioned in this report should be used as guides by the trail supervisors.
- STEP 8: Work should begin on the trails network. The Bureau of Indian Affairs should direct work crews to construct the necessary new trail sections and to maintain and restore the existing trail sections.
- STEP 9: Trail head signs should be placed on all trails and trail regulations should be posted at the trail head.
- STEP 10: Painted blazes should be provided on rocks and trees along each trail. Also, the exact trail distances (mileage) and walking time should be recorded for use in the recommended trails brochure. This step can be part of Step 8 if possible.
- STEP 11: The Tribal Council should have a trails brochure printed for distribution to the public. This brochure should have a map of the trails as well as a description of each trail as recommended in this report.
- STEP 12: The Tribal Council should distribute the trails brochure to the public by placing the brochure at the Cherokee Museum, at the Oconaluftee Indian Village, at the Mountainside Theater, and at commercial establishment.







STEP 13: The trails should officially be opened to the public. The Bureau of Indian Affairs should enforce the trail regulations and periodically inspect the trails for needed repairs and sign replacements.

STEP 14: The Tribal Council and Bureau of Indian Affairs should annually review and evaluate the trails system. Consideration should be given to the amount of trail use, problems confronted, and the possibility of additional trail activities.

If the implementation process begins in the latter part of 1978, the Tribal Council should be able to open the trails to the public by late 1979 or by the summer of 1980.







APPENDIX

APPENDICES 1 AND 2 ARE REPRODUCED FROM INFORMATION  
PROVIDED BY THE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE







## APPENDIX 1

### TRAIL LOCATION CONSTRAINTS INVENTORY

#### I. NATURAL RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

##### A. Soils

Avoid the following soils:

##### 1. Highly erosive soil

- a. Trail deterioration in tread and cut and fill slopes will occur.
- b. Rocks and gravel will be exposed to trail user as soil disappears.
- c. User will take detours thus expanding problems on trail sides.
- d. Resource damage around the trail can include:

- Sediments in water courses
- Deposits over plants near the trail
- Loss of soil around roots of trees and shrubs.

##### 2. Wet soils

- a. Poorly drained soils such as clay and peats in low areas such as bogs and meadows.
- b. Seasonally wet areas that will coincide with season of use.
- c. Soils with hardpan layers below that cause poor drainage above.
- d. Soils that compact easily and create low puddling areas in the trail.

##### 3. Shallow soils

- a. Shallow soils over bedrock
- b. Fragile alpine soils at high elevations

##### 4. Light-colored soils

- a. Avoid light-colored soils that will contrast with the surrounding vegetation.



## 5. Poor Fertility Soils

- a. Avoid infertile soils that are not capable of revegetating cut and fill slopes.

## B. Wildlife Habitats

1. Avoid areas where the following wildlife activities occur and trail use would severely disrupt (especially avoid rare and endangered species habitat).

- a. Nesting
- b. Feeding
- c. Mating
- d. Migration routes
- e. Calving areas
- f. Seasonal concentration areas

### 2. Utilize

- a. Viewpoints for wildlife observation without disturbance.

## C. Vegetation

1. Avoid the following:

- a. Sensitive plant communities (such as Alpine)
- b. Rare or unique species of plants
- c. Areas with numerous snags requiring extensive removal to avoid continuous trail blockage

### 2. Utilize

- a. Dense vegetation to help contain trail users
- b. Give users wind protection with plant buffers
- c. Give users sun and rain protection with tree canopies
- d. Dense masses of plants to absorb sounds that are undesirable
- e. To visually buffer from undesirable features or activities

## D. Water Courses and Features

1. Avoid the following situations:

- a. Trail locations along the edges of lakes and streams
- b. Watercourse crossings should be kept to a minimum
- c. Springs and seeps that will cause wet or icy surfaces of the trail tread



- d. Flood plains subject to frequent scouring
- 2. Utilize
  - a. Periodic water access points for hikers and horses to refresh themselves
  - b. Views of water features such as cascades or lakes.
- E. Topography
  - 1. Avoid the following:
    - a. Steep slopes that will require extensive earth-work for trail construction
    - b. Cliffs and ledges requiring extensive trail blasting
    - c. Bedrock areas where trail construction will be difficult and costly
    - d. Talus slopes, avalanche paths and rockslide areas.
  - 2. Utilize
    - a. A variety of topographic features to vary the user experience.

## II. CULTURAL RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

### A. Visual Constraints

Use a visual management system (see National Forest Landscape Management Handbook Vol. 1 No. 462).

- 1. Determine the visual quality objectives in the study area. (Visual quality objective in the USFS is a combination of variety class + viewer sensitivity + distance viewed).
- 2. Determine the visual absorptive capability of the landscape. (This is a combination of physical factors that indicate how easy or difficult it will be to place a proposed facility in the landscape and achieve the visual quality objective).

Factors may include:

- a. vegetative variety



- b. topographic variety
- c. soil color contrast potential
- d. soil erodibility potential
- e. focal feature locations
- f. vegetative screening potential.

3. Select the best areas for trail location based on visual quality objectives and visual absorptive capability inventories.

#### B. Archaeological and Historical Constraints

1. Avoid all known significant archaeological or historical sites which would be impacted by trail construction.
2. Develop interpretive facilities for sites near the trail which would be of interest to the forest visitor, but not easily subject to vandalism or removal.
3. After the trail location has been staked have an archaeologist walk the proposed trail to determine if there are any unknown sites which would be disturbed.

#### C. Forest Management Activities

1. Inventory all activities that would have a negative effect on the visitor's experience on the trail.
2. The trail location should avoid both physical including noise and visual contact with these activities.
3. Some activities which may be in conflict with most trail users include the following:
  - a. power lines
  - b. roads
  - c. fuelbreaks
  - d. timbercuts
  - e. mines
  - f. electronic sites
  - g. structures
  - h. ski lift towers
  - i. oil wells

### III. CAMPSITE LOCATION CRITERIA

#### A. Topography

1. Select locations where topography is suitable for camping activities with little or no modification.
2. Select locations that are reasonably accessible.



3. Select locations without adjacent topographic hazards--cliffs, rock slides, etc.
4. Select locations where topography provides shelter from strong winds.

B. Soils

1. Select locations where soils are not easily erodable or compactable.
2. Select locations that are not wet soils.
3. Select locations without shallow soils or many rocks or rock outcrops.

C. Vegetation

1. Select locations without rare or endangered plant species.
2. Select locations where snags or living trees are not hazardous, such as limb fall, wind-blow prone, poisonous, etc.
3. Select locations where vegetation provides protection from prevailing winds.
4. Select locations where vegetation is not a severe fire hazard.

D. Water Supply

1. Select locations with adequate water supply for drinking, cooking and washing.
2. Select locations where supplies should be adequate during the anticipated use periods.

E. Noise

1. Select campsite locations that are screened from undesirable noise by landforms and/or vegetation.

F. Sanitation

1. Select locations where sanitation problems will not develop due to soils or nearness to water supplies.

G. Visual

1. Select locations that fire screened from the main trail.



2. Select locations that provide viewing opportunities for the camper.

#### H. Distance

1. Select locations far enough from the trailhead or other access routes so that the site will not become an easy walk-in party site.
2. Select locations that are spaced at a reasonable day's hike from each other and the trailhead(s).

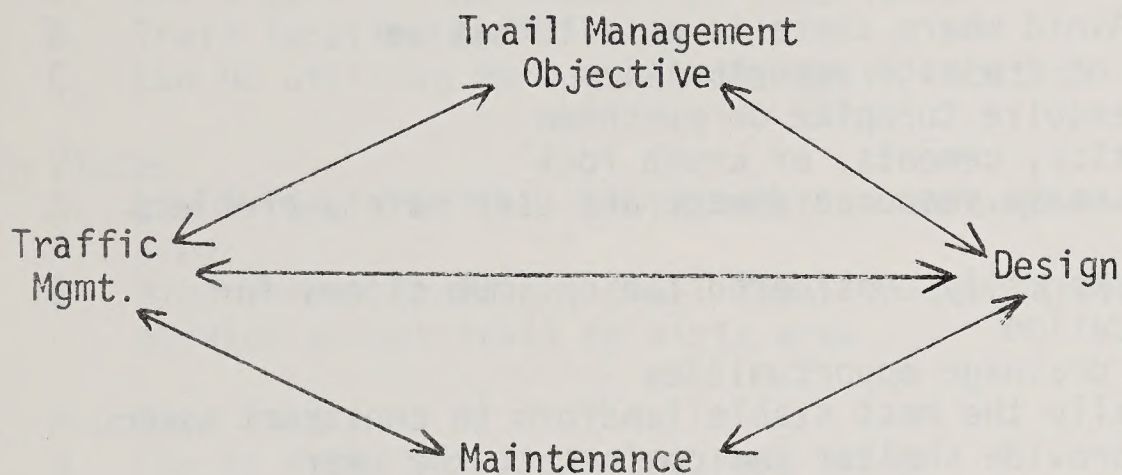


## APPENDIX II

### GUIDELINES FOR TRAIL DESIGN--Robert Duncan

#### Introduction:

Design guidelines are controls to insure that developed trails are permanent in character, serve the planned purpose, provide enjoyment and safety for the user, do not contribute to unacceptable resource damage, and are economical to maintain. To accomplish this, one must understand the relationship between:



#### Outline:

Trail Management Objective has stated:

- I. Kind of User
  - A. Hiker only
  - B. All purpose trail: hiker, horse, motorized
  - C. Special recreation: walkways, nature trail, wheelchair, or handicapped
- II. User Experience Type
  - A. Access trunk: convenient, reliable, safe for a wide range of user experience group
- III. Volume of Use
  - A. Light - 500 per season
  - B. Medium - 500-2,500 per season
  - C. Heavy - 2,500-5,000 per season
  - D. Extra heavy - over 5,000 per season
  - E. Design elements must be sensitive to these objectives including inventoried opportunities and still meet land management constraints
- IV. Design Elements
  - A. Tread width
  - B. Alignment



- C. Grades
- D. Structures
- E. Signing
- F. Revegetation

V. Tread Width: Normally is determined from type, volume of traffic, side slopes, and user safety.

- A. Normal soil and side slopes 18"-24"
- B. Shale slides, stream fords, precipices 36"
- C. Peat bogs, wet areas, flat ground. When the tread is built from ground level up (on top) a wider tread is normally required for bearing support

#### VI. Side Slopes

- A. 0-10% - Avoid where there is an alternative
  - 1. Lack of drainage opportunities
  - 2. May require turnpike or puncheon
  - 3. Plastics, cements, or crush rock
  - 4. May create resource damage and user safety problems
- B. 10-70% - Normally considered the optimum slopes for trail location
  - 1. Good drainage opportunities
  - 2. Normally the most stable landform to construct upon
  - 3. May provide shelter and comfort to the user
  - 4. Provides views and vistas
- C. 70% and over - normally should be avoided
  - 1. Can be unstable
  - 2. Construction and maintenance cost are higher
  - 3. Can create user safety problems

#### VII. Alignment - Ideal Alignment will:

- A. Fit the trail to the land
- B. Take advantage of inventoried opportunities
- C. Angle across the slope -- drainage and visual
- D. Be generally curvilinear, avoiding long, straight stretches

#### VIII. Switchbacks: A necessary part of alignment where you find the following conditions:

- A. Trail location confined to limited area
- B. Elevation difference between controls dictates trail length between control points
- C. Soil types restrict grades
- D. Steep side slopes
  - 1. Advantages
    - a. Potential elevation gain within a restricted area
  - 2. Disadvantages
    - a. Need for traffic control structures, when natural barriers do not exist
    - b. Requires 50-100% above normal excavation
    - c. Can be a visual and resource impact



- IX. Climbing Turns
  - A. Can be used in place of the switchback
  - B. Side slope is the key to use and location
  - C. Maintain acceptable grade
    - 1. Advantages
      - a. Normal tread excavation
      - b. Tends to lay lightly on the land
      - c. Normally can use natural traffic control barriers
      - d. Horse and motorized traffic can negotiate much easier
- X. Views
  - A. Are a part of the recreation experience
  - B. Trail location shall enhance
  - C. Can be utilized throughout the trail location
- XI. Vistas
  - A. Low volume traffic: trail location through vasta area
  - B. High volume traffic: trail location should avoid; provide access trail to vista area
- XII. Mountain Pass
  - A. Can be excellent vista and rest areas
  - B. May not accommodate user groups
  - C. May require access trail to vista area
  - D. Always locate trail on side slope
  - E. Avoid location in the bottom where drainage problem exists
- XIII. Bog, Wet Areas, and Open Meadows
  - A. Avoid these areas where possible
  - B. Normally will not support use without unacceptable visual and resource damage
  - C. Are very slow to recover
  - D. Require costly resource and user safety structures
  - E. One key problem is a lack of natural traffic control
- XIV. Fragile and Highly Erosive Soils
  - A. Avoid where possible
  - B. Key item resource protection
  - D. Use materials and structures. Examples: select natuve barrow material
    - 1. For visual compatability
    - 2. Crush rock, plastics, fabric, bituminous, or cement materials
    - 3. Puncheon or turnpike
- XV. Campsite Access
  - A. 600' and over
    - 1. Should provide loop system
    - 2. User convenience
    - 3. Resource protection



- B. 600' and under
  - 1. Single access trail should be considered
- XVI. Horse Hiker Camp Separated by Landform or Screen
  - A. Dictates separate access trails
  - B. Key items user safety and user conflict
- XVII. Cultural and Historical Sites -- Trail Location and Standard
  - A. Each site to be considered on an individual basis
  - B. Trunk trail may access site
  - C. Site may require separate access trail
- XVIII. Grades -- Key Items: Soils, Drainage, User Types
  - A. Up to 10% normally meets resource and user needs
  - B. Steeper grades may be used where the location will preserve trailside esthetics
  - C. Above 10% soil types and user safety needs must be carefully analyzed
  - D. Constant grades are to be avoided
- XIX. Clearing
  - A. All purpose trails
    - 1. 8'-brush, projecting limbs, sapline trees and down logs
    - 2. 6' - 10" dbh and larger will be removed as necessary for travelway width
    - 3. 10' - overhead clearance from trail tread
  - B. Hiker trails
    - 1. 4'-brush, projecting limbs, sapling trees, and down logs
    - 2. 3' - live trees as necessary for travelway width
    - 3. 8' - overhead clearance from trail tread
  - C. The basic key
    - 1. User safety and enjoyment to be accomplished within visual constraints
    - 2. Old dead snags can be a safety hazard or a scenic value
- XX. Structures: Where careful analysis dictates a structure-- bridges, turnpikes, punchon, culvert -- these guidelines should be followed.
  - A. Quality material to permit low maintenance cost
  - B. Type of material that blends best with the environment
  - C. Structurally sound to withstand planned use and the elements, for example, snow load in the higher elevations.
- XXI. Stream Crossings
  - A. Hiker
    - 1. Stepping stones



2. Vertical log sections
3. Horizontal foot log

B. Horse

1. Fords
2. Bridge structure

C. Hiker: keep dry -- safety

D. Horse: safety, stream bank and vegetation protection, stream siltation

1. Best available location
2. Approach grades maximum 10%
3. Smooth gravel bottom
4. Maximum depth of water 19-24"

When the above cannot fully be accomplished, a bridge should be the next alternative

XXII. Bridge Structures

- A. Hiker: safety--foot log will have a minimum flat surface of 12" and hand rail when need for safety
- B. All purpose bridge: Safety--design to achieve permanency and harmonize with surrounding environment
  1. Best available location
  2. Smooth grade at each approach

XXIII. Signing

- A. Complete yet compatible with intended experience level
- B. Durable, rustic appearing
- C. Systematized for continuity of information
- D. Materials used and mounting method shall resist weather, rodent, and vandalism damage

XXIV. Revegetation: Design Criteria that will Influence Revegetation Needs

- A. On side slopes between 10-30%, the design may stipulate construction be accomplished by hand-held compactor
- B. Rake soil and duff; side cast waste down to a maximum depth of 2"
- C. Seed same year construction is completed
- D. Use native grass and shrubs







## APPENDIX III

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Pursuant to the requirements of and guidelines established by the National Environmental Policy Act, the Council on Environmental Quality, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the North Carolina Environmental Policy Act, the following is a summary of environmental considerations regarding the recommendations and conclusions in this document.

#### Abstract

The Cherokee Reservation Trails Plan proposed a network of trails to be used for hiking, camping, horseback riding, and other recreational activities. Trails management policies, guidelines and regulations are recommended for the implementation of the Plan. Also, recommendations are made for the maintenance of trails.

#### Environmental Impact

The conclusions and recommendations, if implemented, will overall have a favorable impact on the environment.

#### Adverse Environmental Effects

Some localized, short-term effects resulting primarily from the construction of new trails.

#### Alternatives

The alternative to this plan is an uncoordinated and unmaintained system of trails.

#### Relationship of Short-Term to Long-Term Effects on the Environment

It is believed the Trails Plan will be implemented in a careful manner so as to disturb the environment as little as possible. The leisure time



recreation activities made available from this Plan will have a long-term benefit to users of the trails.

#### Mitigation Measures to Minimize Impact

Specific measures cannot be determined until this document is endorsed and implementation begins.

#### Irreversible Commitments of Resources

The recommendations contained in this report do not involve the irreversible commitment of resources.

#### Federal, State and Local Environmental Controls

All existing federal, state and local environmental controls are applicable.







